

Liberation from Relationship Addiction

by Yogi Amrit Desai

There are two types of addictions: attaching to pleasure and avoiding pain. Sex falls into both, and that is what makes it such a powerful force. It can numb us from experiencing what is present and distort our entire perception of reality. When sexual energies are charged and in harmony between lovers, psychic disharmony is submerged. When sexual attraction diminishes, the underlying discord surfaces. At first, needs are satisfied naturally because the initial bond is based on biological energy. But then, psychological expectations fail to be met by the other. The conflict that follows is not between people; it is between expectations.

An expectation is how you think reality should be which has nothing to do with the actual reality. Meanwhile every thought you project carries life force energy. The stronger the emotion with which the thought is charged, the more penetrating it becomes. It can travel greater distances without being diffused.

When you project a thought onto something actual, you create the illusion called expectation. If you think, I prefer blondes, and then one day your lover dyes her hair red, your precious life energy is wasted in the struggle against the fact that this person is now a redhead. You have managed to turn the present moment into your enemy. There is no problem in having thoughts and preferences; the problem arises when you identify with them. Then you end up giving your lover a mask, a persona. After that, you cannot see them or hear them. Every interaction is processed through the mask that you gave them. It's not their mask; it's yours, custom-designed according to your own expectations.

The moment you impose an expectation, you are no longer interacting with your lover. You are interacting with your own concepts that have nothing to do with them. You are now relating not with a person but with a ghost. Instead of living in the present moment, you are carrying around a dead identity in your mind. You have constructed a ghost town, and to compound the problem, you have recruited the other person to live there with you.

It may seem you are in a relationship but really you are not. For two people to be in a relationship, each person must first be in relationship with his or her self. This is why most relationships are so complicated. When you get married, it is not a twosome but a foursome. Each of you has an ego mind and a Higher Self. The ego mind expects; the Higher Self accepts. If you are operating from your ego mind, you expect the other person to provide what only you can give yourself, which is self-acceptance. But when you are established in your Higher Self, you accept yourself completely. Only then are you capable of accepting others.

Marriage never fails; expectations do. When expectations fail, we call it divorce.

All expectations are doomed because they require an outside resource to fulfill a need that can only be sourced internally. When you expect another to make you whole, you are assigning that person an impossible task. How easily do we form an opinion about a person and then hold them hostage for violating our expectations? By blaming the other for your unfulfilled expectations, you are only victimizing yourself. Dependence on anyone or anything external disempowers you and depletes your life force, whether it's a dysfunctional relationship with alcohol, food, sex or another person. This is addiction.

If you strive to meet the other person's expectations, you are enabling them in their own addiction as well as your own. You are trying to feel comfortable by making them feel comfortable, but all you are doing is reinforcing who you are not and creating more stress. You are avoiding the discomfort of revealing the truth, which is inevitable. The truth always comes out eventually. You are just prolonging your suffering and the suffering of the other by not being honest about what you really want.

Whatever it is that you want from the other, you must first learn to give it. Only then can you connect to the Source of power within. Instead of asking for love, be loving. Instead of asking for acceptance, be accepting. Instead of asking to be understood; be understanding. When we drop the ego mind, we drop expectations. And what remains? The Higher Self, which simply accepts.

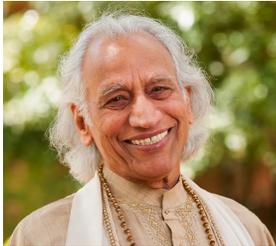
All acceptance starts with self-acceptance. Only when you accept yourself are you able to accept others. This is unconditional love, free of expectations. Then you no longer treat the other person as an object. When there is harmony, there is no subject or object; there is only oneness. When you accept what is as is, the object disappears and the divinity behind the mask reveals itself. Now you are in direct interaction with the present moment, in a close and deep relationship with yourself and your life. Your divinity shines through and becomes a mirror to reflect your lover's Higher Self back to them.

Using sex to avoid psychological pain will only drain your energy and feed the underlying issue that remains unresolved. But sex can connect hearts when lovers use it as a mirror. You can reflect each other's vulnerabilities as well as your divinity. In fact, every relationship

—whether it’s a 50-year marriage or a 30-second conversation with a bank teller—will show you whether you are connected to or separate from your Source. Everyone who crosses your path is a mirror if you let go of preconceptions.

The writer Gabriel García Márquez once said, “I know my wife so well, she’s an utter mystery to me!” This is what it means to be free of expectations. Everyone, no matter how well you think you know them, is new in every moment. As are you! When we drop the habit of projecting dead memories of the past onto the present, we can enjoy an intimate relationship with all that arises as it arises, in love with the mystery of life as it unfolds.

This article, and many more, are available online at IAM.yoga.



Gurudev Shri (Yogi) Amritji Desai is one of a handful of gurus who came to America from India in the early 1960s. This wave began the initial yoga craze that has grown into massive and diverse yoga practices we have worldwide today. Amritji has been repeatedly honored for being one of the earliest pioneers in bringing yoga to the West. He is last living guru from this initial wave.